



Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Special Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

1:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

Second Floor, City Hall

320 Esplanade, Sydney, Nova Scotia

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Land Acknowledgement

Roll Call

1. Approval of Agenda: (Motion required)

2. In Camera

2.1 Sale of Municipal (PID 15915101) – 4829959 Nova Scotia

Limited, Welton Street, Sydney (District 12): Sheila

Kolanko, Property Manager

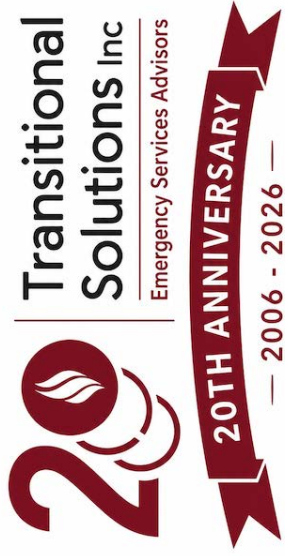
(In accordance with section 22(2)(a) of the *Municipal Government Act*.)

3. Fire Service Review - Laying a Foundation for a Strong Future:

Chris Harrow, Emergency Services Advisor, Transitional Solutions Inc.

(See page 4)

Adjournment



Fire Service Review

Laying a Foundation for a Strong Future

CBRM Council Presentation

Sep 29, 2026

WHY A FIRE REVIEW? WHY NOW?

01

Regulatory Compliance

Increasing legislative, OH&S, and compliance requirements

02

Regional Service Integration

Need for a cohesive, strong regional fire service

03

Governance & Liability

Ensuring liability and proper designated authorities have been identified and protected

04

Service Standards & AHJ

Need for defensible, clearly defined Level of Service (LOS) and Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)

What is Council's Role?

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COUNCIL'S MAIN ROLE - LOS

- ✓ Using the **identified risks** in the risk assessment document, Council along with the Fire Chief and Senior Management Staff, identify the **services** the fire department shall provide to the residents of the municipality
- ✓ Should include **core services** like fire suppression, motor vehicle collisions, medical first response and fire prevention program
- ✓ Required to also include **specialty rescue services** like water rescue, confined space or high angle rescue

COUNCIL'S MAIN ROLE - LOS

- ✓ Council passes **bylaw** to set the level of service offered by the Municipality's fire department to establish clear guideline to the residents of CBRM
- ✓ Council must be prepared once the level is set to **fund** the resources needed to provide the identified services
- ✓ Finding the balance of what the municipality can **afford** and what the **residents need** for services is the key
- ✓ Have the options of **supplementing the level of service** with mutual aid, automatic aid agreements or industrial agreements

Level of service - Core services

The most common and important “Core” Fire Services offered throughout the Alberta Fire Service.

Service	Service Level	General Description of Service	Comments
General Firefighting	Operations	Required basic skills and training post orientation; involves personal and team safety - basic JPRs from NFPA 1010	Compulsory Service
Apparatus & Vehicle Operations/Pumping	Operations	Driver training to meet Traffic Safety Act; operations of vehicle systems excluding pump operations - basic JPRs from NFPA 1010	Compulsory Service
Fire Suppression (Exterior Operations)	Operations	Training based on NFPA 1010; Optional certification achieved through an accredited provider	Compulsory Service - Min staff 3
Fire Suppression (Interior Operations)	Operations	Training based on NFPA 1010; Optional certification achieved through an accredited provider	Optional Service - Min staff 4
Wildland - Grassland Firefighting	Operations	Training based on NFPA 1140	Compulsory Service - Min Staff 4
Dangerous Goods and HazMat	Awareness	Ability to identify a Hazmat event and potential consequences; ability to ensure public safety and secure hazardous zone(s) and perform evacuation if necessary; NFPA 470	Compulsory Service - Min Staff 3
Vehicle Extrication / Firefighting	Operations	Training based on NFPA 1010; Optional certification achieved through an accredited provider	Compulsory Service - Min Staff 4
Traffic Control	Operations	Basic competencies in working on roadways; providing a safe working area for all responders; traffic control and flow; NFPA 1091	Compulsory Service - Min staff 3
Medical First Response	Operations	Basic first aid; CPR; AED; assist ANB/EMS with support at a medical emergency that involves intervention for immediately life-threatening medical conditions;	Optional Service - Min Staff 2, Max Staff 4
Response to Alarms	Operations	Response to occupancies that include monitored alarms systems, CO alarms, suspicious odours; Basic knowledge of fire alarm panel functions	Compulsory Service - Min staff 3

Current State Snapshot

Numerous Volunteer Stations

Large number of stations run in various means and offering various services

Numerous Authorities in the Fire Service

Current CBRM Fire Mgt staff are handcuffed in managing the entire department

Lack of Overall Staffing Plan

Need to develop an overall response and staffing plan for entire region

Future Demands

Recruitment/Retention
Streamlining of Fire Stations and Apparatus needs

Key Risks



High Liability Concerns

Council/Fire Chiefs



Too Many AHJ's

Fire stations are allowed to decide on own level's of service



No Overall Plan/Future Model

Need for staffing model and future planning to move department forward



Sustainability

Creating a model that is sustainable moving forward for the entire region

Key Risks



Capital Equipment Planning

Fire Mgt is handcuffed to purchase and place apparatus in proper locales



Specialty Rescue Plan

Large need for over regional specialty rescue plan



Consistent Training

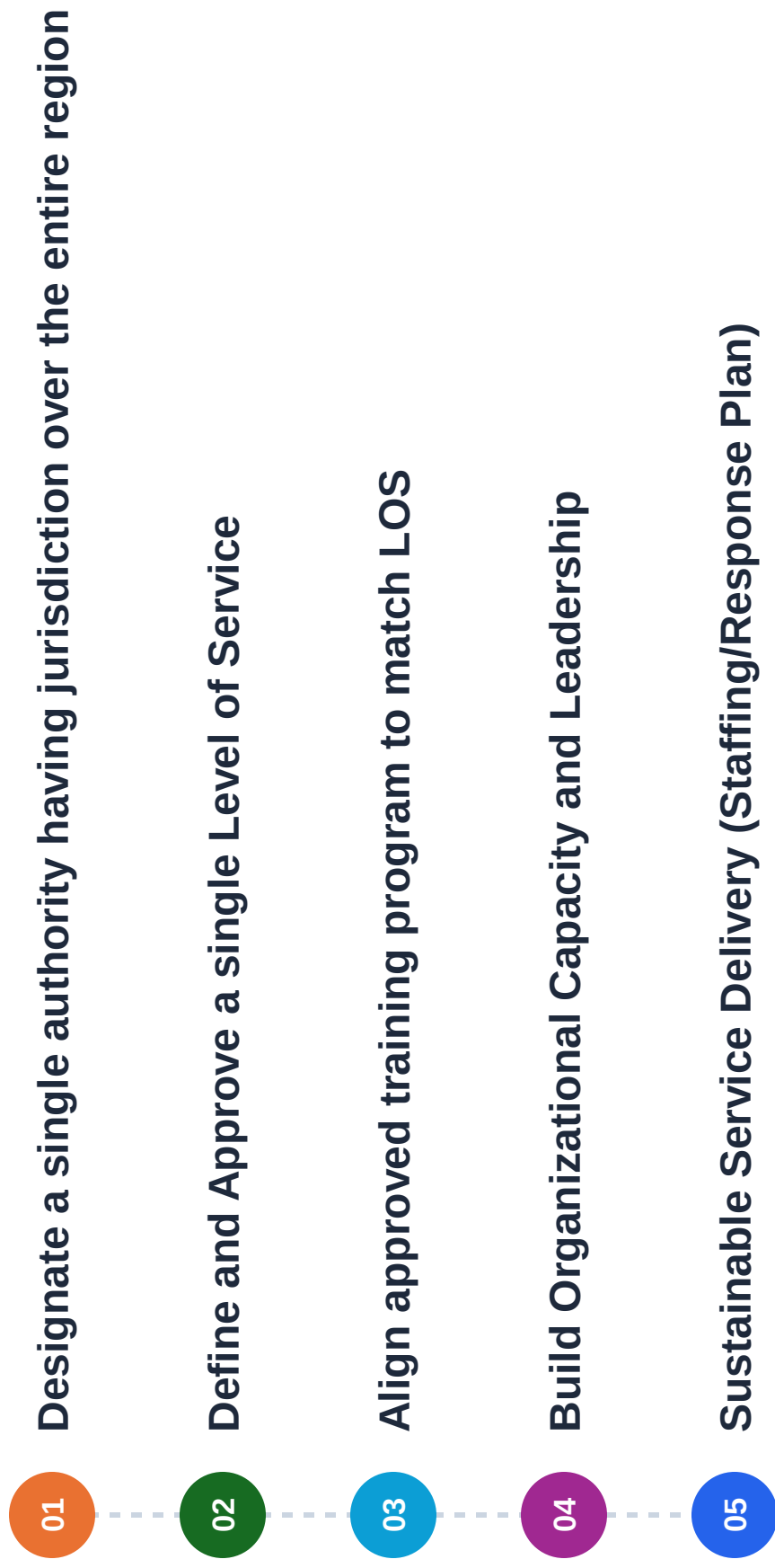
Need for approved training standards for all departments to ensure consistency



Fire Prevention/Public Education

More consistent delivery across the entire region to ensure covered properly

From Risk to Action



Main Gaps and Recommended Direction

Each theme links a system gap to a practical direction for change

01	Volunteer Sustainability and Leadership	GAP Variable availability and limited succession planning	DIRECTION System-wide staffing benchmarks, volunteer support, and leadership development
02	Level of Service and Performance	GAP No municipality-wide LOS or Standard of Cover	DIRECTION Council-approved service levels with measurable response targets
03	Training, Competency, and Readiness	GAP Training access, records, and competency validation vary	DIRECTION Common SOGs, qualifications, annual training, and verified records
04	Governance and Administrative Controls	GAP Multiple authorities create fragmented accountability	DIRECTION One AHJ, phased integration, common policy, and added capacity

Main Gaps and Recommended Direction

Each theme links a system gap to a practical direction for change

05	Water Supply, Mutual Aid, and Coordination	GAP Response depends on legacy boundaries and informal coordination	DIRECTION Resource-based dispatch, automatic aid, and regional deployment
06	Community Risk Reduction	GAP Prevention, inspections, education, and pre-plans vary	DIRECTION A coordinated, risk-based prevention and public education program
07	Infrastructure, Fleet, and Capital	GAP Assets and replacement decisions remain decentralized	DIRECTION Regional asset strategies, lifecycle plans, reserves, and standardized procurement

01 Volunteer Sustainability and Leadership Capacity

GAP

- Volunteer availability varies by time and location
- No system-wide staffing plan or response-force benchmark
- Leadership continuity and succession planning remain informal

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Set staffing benchmarks tied to the approved Level of Service
- Strengthen recruitment, retention, onboarding, and member support
- Create officer development and succession pathways

WHY IT MATTERS

A sustainable volunteer model needs clear expectations, dependable support, and future leaders.

GAP

- Council has not adopted one municipality-wide Level of Service
- Response expectations differ among urban, rural, and remote areas
- Incomplete time and staffing data limits performance evaluation

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Adopt differentiated level of service based on risk and demand
- Develop a formal Standard of Cover with response targets
- Implement consistent data collection and annual Council reporting

WHY IT MATTERS

Defined expectations allow Council to align risk, resources, funding, and public accountability.

GAP

- Training delivery and access vary between departments
- Certification and competency records are not consistently verified
- Operational procedures are not governed by one adopted SOG framework

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Adopt common SOGs linked to service expectations
- Publish an annual training plan and minimum qualifications
- Use one system for records, competency validation, and specialty readiness

WHY IT MATTERS

Consistent training and procedures are prerequisites for safe multi-station response.

GAP

- CBRM lacks one clearly established Authority Having Jurisdiction
- Independent governance limits common policies and financial oversight
- Current management capacity cannot support 34 stations as one system

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Establish one AHJ through a Council-approved bylaw
- Phase departments into a common governance and policy framework
- Add capacity for operations, training, logistics, data, finance, and volunteer support

WHY IT MATTERS

Clear authority and adequate capacity must come before full operational integration.

GAP

- Legacy station boundaries influence which resources respond
- Cross-boundary support relies on inconsistent mutual or automatic aid arrangements
- Apparatus-heavy water supply solutions add cost and complexity

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Move toward resource-based dispatch under the Standards of Cover
- Formalize automatic aid, response districts, and incident command practices
- Plan water supply and specialty capabilities as regional resources

WHY IT MATTERS

Regional deployment sends the closest appropriate people and equipment to each incident.

GAP

- Inspection policies and frequencies are not consistent across CBRM
- Public education and pre-incident planning vary by department
- Fire investigation data is not captured through one defined model

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Adopt a Council-approved, risk-based inspection policy
- Coordinate public education, smoke-alarm, and pre-plan programs regionally
- Standardize fire investigation and use incident data to target prevention

WHY IT MATTERS

Prevention reduces risk before an emergency and is especially important where travel times are longer.

GAP

- Facilities and fleet are managed through fragmented ownership and local priorities
- Asset condition, deployment, and replacement data are incomplete
- No approved long-term capital plan or dedicated fire capital reserve exists

RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

- Complete regional facility and fleet strategies linked to LOS and risk
- Standardize specifications, lifecycle criteria, maintenance, and procurement
- Create a capital plan, reserve policy, and transparent process for asset transfer

WHY IT MATTERS

Coordinated lifecycle planning can improve reliability while reducing duplication and financial risk.

Thank you